

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product that is associated with a number of configurable features, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically interact with a seller of the product over ~~the Internet~~ a network during the configuration, the method comprising:

receiving into a configuration engine ~~application~~ of the seller a selected feature from the customer;

communicating, from the configuration engine of the seller to a manufacturer system, the selected feature, the communication being during the configuration with the customer, wherein the manufacturer system is associated with a manufacturer of the selected feature, wherein the manufacturer is independent from the seller;

receiving into the configuration engine from the manufacturer system over the network ~~Internet~~ an automated real-time response to the communicated selected feature, the automated real-time response including an availability date that corresponds to the selected feature, the response being received during the configuration with the customer; and

updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect the selected feature and the availability date;

~~wherein the availability date received from the manufacturer over the Internet is provided to or by a supply chain planning (SCP) system.~~

36-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product incorporating at least one feature to be selected by a customer, the method comprising:

(a) receiving a feature selection from the customer at a seller;

(b) updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect constraints imposed by the received feature selection, the constraints relating to a technical feature limitation, a price limitation or availability of the configurable product;

(c) providing the received selection to a supplier system during a configuration of the product with the customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a supplier of the selected feature, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller;

(d) receiving real-time information from the supplier system comprising at least one of availability date and price for the received selection, the information being received by the customer during the configuration;

(e) ~~where~~ wherein when an indication is received from the customer desires are indicating the customer is not satisfied with the availability date or price, providing to the supplier system at least one of a customer desired availability date and a customer desired price for the selection;

(f) providing to the customer accommodation data from the supplier system, the accommodation data responsive to the at least one of the customer desired availability date and the customer desired price for the selection, wherein the accommodation data includes a second availability date or a second price; and

(g) updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the received selection;
~~wherein the customer desires comprise either at least one of a plurality of availability dates or at least one of a plurality of prices, for the selected feature.~~

40. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product incorporating at least one feature to be selected by a customer, the method comprising:

(a) receiving a feature selection from the customer at a seller, the seller being a seller of the configurable product to the customer;

(b) updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect constraints imposed by the selection and relating to compatibility among features of the configurable product;

8 (c) providing the received selection to a supplier of inventory to the seller
9 during a configuration of the product with the customer, wherein the supplier is independent
10 from the seller;

11 (d) receiving real-time information from the supplier, the information
12 comprising a plurality of availability dates and a plurality of prices for the received selection, the
13 information being received by the customer during the configuration;

14 (e) ~~where~~ wherein when an indication is received from the customer ~~desires~~
15 are indicating the customer is not satisfied with the availability date or price, providing to the
16 supplier at least one of a customer desired availability date and a customer desired price for the
17 received selection;

18 (f) providing to the customer accommodation data from the supplier, the
19 accommodation data responsive to the at least one of the customer desired availability date and
20 the customer desired price for the selection, wherein the accommodation data includes a second
21 availability date or a second price; and

22 (g) updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of
23 materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the received selection.

1 41-49. (Cancelled)

1 50. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, further comprising: repeating
2 the steps of receiving into a configuration ~~engine application~~ a selected feature, communicating
3 to a manufacturer system the selected feature, receiving from the manufacturer system an
4 automated real-time response including an availability date, and updating a number of times until
5 the configuration is complete thereby yielding a completed bill of materials.

1 51. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the step of receiving
2 from the manufacturer system an automated real-time response including an availability date is
3 preceded by the step of communicating the selected feature to a vendor, wherein the
4 manufacturer obtains materials from the vendor for the selected feature.

1 52. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, the method further comprising:
2 in response to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer, communicating

3 a customer-specified availability date to at least one of the ~~seller and manufacturer~~ configuration
4 engine or the manufacturer system.

1 53. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date
2 received from the manufacturer system is in response to a customer-specified availability date
3 communicated to at least one of the ~~seller and manufacturer~~ configuration engine or the
4 manufacturer system.

1 54. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date
2 received from the manufacturer system is in response to a customer-specified price
3 communicated to at least one of the ~~seller and manufacturer~~ configuration engine or the
4 manufacturer system.

1 55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising: deriving,
2 from the in-process bill of materials, an in-process manufacturing bill of materials that reflects
3 the received availability date that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 56. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the automated real-
2 time response also includes the method further comprising: receiving a received price that
3 corresponds to the selected feature.

1 57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 36, the method further comprising:
2 in response to the received price being unsatisfactory to the customer, communicating a
3 customer-specified price to at least one of the ~~seller and manufacturer~~ configuration engine or the
4 manufacturer system.

1 58. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 36, wherein the price received is
2 in response to a customer-specified availability date communicated to at least one of the ~~seller~~
3 ~~and manufacturer~~ configuration engine or the manufacturer system.

1 59. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 36, wherein the price received is
2 in response to a customer-specified price communicated to at least one of the ~~seller and~~
3 ~~manufacturer~~ configuration engine or the manufacturer system.

1 60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein a relationship
2 between the customer and the seller has a configuration side associated with the customer, and a
3 resource planning side associated with the seller, and the customer-seller relationship is
4 respectively one of a consumer-seller relationship, a seller-supplier relationship and a supplier-
5 vendor relationship.

1 61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising:
2 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, deriving an in-process pricing bill of materials from the in-process bill of
4 materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of materials reflects the price of the selected
5 feature; and
6 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the resource
7 planning side, deriving the in-process pricing bill of materials from an in-process manufacturing
8 bill of materials that is derived from the in-process bill of materials and reflects the received
9 availability date of the selected feature.

1 62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the pricing bill of
2 materials is derived from the configuration bill of materials.

1 63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the pricing bill of
2 materials is derived from the manufacturing bill of materials.

1 64. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 39, wherein the step (g) of
2 updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a
3 configuration bill of materials is based upon the accommodation data from the supplier system.

1 65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the pricing bill of
2 materials is derived from the configuration bill of materials.

1 66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the pricing bill of
2 materials is derived from the manufacturing bill of materials.

1 67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the step (g) of
2 updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a
3 configuration bill of materials is based upon the accommodation data from the supplier.

1 68. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product having at least one
2 selectable feature, the method comprising:

3 receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product at a
4 configuration ~~engine application~~ of a seller of the product, the seller being a seller of the product
5 to the customer;

6 communicating the received selection from the configuration ~~engine application~~
7 to a supplier system of a supplier to the seller, the communication being during the configuration
8 with the customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a supplier of the selected
9 feature, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller;

10 receiving into the configuration engine from the supplier system an automated
11 response to the communicated received selection, the automated real-time response including an
12 availability date of the selected feature, the response being received during the configuration
13 with the customer;

14 updating an in-process bill of materials based upon the availability date of the
15 selected feature; and

16 using the updated in-process bill of materials to determine a first availability date
17 of the product, the first availability date of the product being based on at least the availability
18 date of the selected feature; and

19 providing the first availability date of the product to the customer.

1 69. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 68, wherein the automated real-
2 time response is generated by a manufacturer of the selected feature.

1 70. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product having at least one
2 selectable feature, the method comprising:

3 receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product at a
4 configuration ~~engine application~~ of a seller of the product;

communicating the received selection from the configuration application to a supplier system, the communication being during the configuration with the customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a supplier of the selected feature, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller;

receiving into the configuration engine from the supplier system an automated real-time response to the communicated received selection, the automated real-time response including an availability date of the selected feature, the response being received during the configuration with the customer;

updating an in-process bill of materials based upon the availability date of the selected feature; and

using the updated in-process bill of materials to determine a first availability date of the product, the first availability date of the product being based on at least the availability date of the selected feature; and

providing the first availability date of the product to the customer;

~~wherein the automated response includes a plurality of availability dates, each of the plurality of availability dates associated with a different price of the selected feature.~~

71. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product having at least one selectable feature, the method comprising:

receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product at a configuration engine application of a seller of the product;

communicating the received selection from the configuration engine application to a supplier system, the communication being during the configuration with the customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a supplier of the selected feature, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller; and

receiving into the configuration engine from the supplier system an automated real-time response to the communicated received selection, ~~the automated response including an availability date of the selected feature,~~ the response being received during the configuration with the customer;

~~updating an in-process bill of materials based upon the availability date of the selected feature; and~~

15 ~~using the updated in-process bill of materials to determine a first availability date~~
16 ~~of the product, the first availability date of the product being based on at least the availability~~
17 ~~date of the selected feature;~~
18 ~~providing the first availability date of the product to the customer;~~
19 ~~providing to the customer a second product price associated with the second~~
20 ~~availability date of the product;~~
21 ~~providing to the customer a determined second availability date of the product;~~
22 ~~providing to the customer a first product price associated with the first availability~~
23 ~~date of the product; and~~
24 ~~providing to the customer a second product price associated with the second~~
25 ~~availability date of the product;~~
26 wherein the real-time automated response ~~further~~ includes a plurality of
27 availability dates associated with the selected feature, each of the plurality of availability dates
28 associated with a different price of the selected feature.

1 72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the first availability
2 date of the product, determined using the updated in-process bill of materials, is further based on
3 an availability date of another selectable feature.

1 73. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 68, further including receiving, at
2 the configuration engine ~~application~~, a feature price that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73, further including updating a
2 product price responsive to the received feature price, and providing the updated product price to
3 the customer.

1 75. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 73, wherein the received feature
2 price is responsive to a customer-specified availability date communicated to the seller and to the
3 supplier system ~~manufacturer~~.

1 76. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product using a computer
2 network, the method comprising:

3 receiving at a configuration engine a set of constraints defining a first set of valid
4 configurations of a product, the product having at least a first selectable feature and a second
5 selectable feature, the set of constraints being determined by a seller or a manufacturer;

6 receiving at the configuration engine a customer-specified constraint, the
7 customer specified constraint being received from a customer and being received using the
8 computer network;

9 receiving at the configuration engine a selection of the first selectable feature, the
10 received selection being received from the customer and being received using the computer
11 network;

12 communicating, from the configuration engine of the seller to the manufacturer,
13 the selection of the first selectable feature, the communication being during a configuration of
14 the product with the customer, wherein the manufacturer is independent from the seller;

15 determining a second set of valid configurations of the product, the second set of
16 valid configurations being a subset of the first set of valid configurations and being constrained
17 by the customer specified constraint and the received selection,

18 wherein the determination of the second set of valid configurations is a real-time
19 response to the selection of the first selectable feature;

20 determining at least two possible configurations of the second selectable feature
21 that satisfy the second set of valid configurations of the product; and

22 providing to the customer from the configuration engine the determined at least
23 two configurations of the second selectable feature, using the computer network.

1 77. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the customer
2 specified constraint includes an availability date of the product.

1 78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the customer
2 specified constraint includes a price of the product or a feature price.

1 79. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, further including determining
2 a feature price using the received selection and using the feature price to update a product price.

1 80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, further including determining
2 a feature availability date using the received selection, and using the feature availability date to
3 determine a product availability date.

1 81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, wherein determining at least
2 two configurations of the second selectable feature that satisfy the second set of valid
3 configurations includes identifying a third configuration of the second selectable feature that
4 would be an invalid configuration due to the customer specified constraint.

1 82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, further including receiving at
2 the configuration engine a feature availability date from a supply system of a manufacturer.

1 83. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product having at least one
2 configurable feature, the method comprising:

3 receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product, at a
4 configuration engine application of a seller of the product, the seller being a seller of the product
5 to the customer;

6 communicating the received selection from the configuration application of the
7 seller to a supplier system of a manufacturer, the manufacturer configured to supply the feature
8 to the seller, the communication being during the configuration with the customer, wherein the
9 supplier system is associated with a manufacturer of the selected feature, wherein the
10 manufacturer is independent from the seller;

11 receiving into the configuration engine from the manufacturer an automated real-
12 time response to the communicated received selection, the automated real-time response
13 including an availability date of the selected feature or a price of the selected feature, the
14 response being received during the configuration with the customer;

15 updating an in-process bill of materials using the automated response;
16 using the updated in-process bill of materials to determine an availability date of
17 the product and a price of the product based on the received selection; and

18 providing, to the customer, ~~the~~ a determined first availability date of the product
19 and ~~the~~ a determined price of the product.

1 84. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 83, wherein communicating the
2 received selection from the configuration system to the supplier system includes communicating
3 using a network~~the Internet~~.

1 85. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product that is associated
2 with a number of configurable features, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically
3 interact with a seller of the product over the Internet during the configuration, the method
4 comprising:

5 receiving into a configuration engine application of the seller a selected feature,
6 from the customer;

7 communicating from the seller to a manufacturer system the selected feature, the
8 communication being during the configuration with the customer, wherein the manufacturer
9 system is associated with a manufacturer of the selected feature, wherein the manufacturer is
10 independent from the seller;

11 receiving into the configuration engine from the manufacturer system an
12 automated real-time response including an availability date that corresponds to the selected
13 feature, the response being received during the configuration with the customer; and

14 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect that selected feature.

1 86. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, further comprising:
2 repeating the steps of receiving into a configuration application a selected feature,
3 communicating to a manufacturer the selected feature, receiving from the manufacturer an
4 automated real-time response including an availability date, and updating a number of times until
5 the configuration is complete thereby yielding a completed bill of materials.

1 87. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, wherein the step of receiving
2 from the manufacturer system an automated response including an availability date is preceded
3 by the step of:
4 communicating the selected feature to a vendor, wherein the manufacturer obtains
5 materials from the vendor for the selected feature.

1 88. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, the method further comprising:
2 in response to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
3 communicating a customer-specified availability date to at least one of the seller and
4 manufacturer system.

1 89. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, wherein the availability date
2 received from the manufacturer system is in response to a customer-specified availability date
3 communicated to at least one of the seller and manufacturer system.

1 90. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, wherein the availability date
2 received from the manufacturer system is in response to a customer-specified price
3 communicated to at least one of the seller and manufacturer system.

1 91. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 85, further comprising:
2 deriving, from the in-process bill of materials, an in-process manufacturing bill of
3 materials that reflects the received availability date that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 92. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, wherein the automated real-
2 time response also includes the method further comprising: receiving a received price that
3 corresponds to the selected feature.

1 93. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 92, the method further comprising:
2 in response to the received price being unsatisfactory to the customer,
3 communicating a customer-specified price to at least one of the seller and manufacturer system.

1 94. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 92, wherein the price received is
2 in response to a customer-specified availability date communicated to at least one of the seller
3 and manufacturer system.

1 95. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 92, wherein the price received is
2 in response to a customer-specified price communicated to at least one of the seller and
3 manufacturer system.

1 96. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 92, wherein a relationship
2 between the customer and the seller has a configuration side associated with the customer, and a
3 resource planning side associated with the seller, and the customer-seller relationship is a
4 consumer-seller relationship.

1 97. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 96, further comprising:
2 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, deriving an in-process pricing bill of materials from the in-process bill of
4 materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of materials reflects the price of the selected
5 feature; and

6 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the resource
7 planning side, deriving the in-process pricing bill of materials from an in-process manufacturing
8 bill of materials that is derived from the in-process bill of materials and reflects the received
9 availability date of the selected feature.

1 98. (Currently Amended) A system for configuring a product that is associated
2 with a number of configurable features, wherein the system allows a customer to interact with a
3 supplier of one or more of the configurable features over a network ~~the Internet~~ during the
4 configuration, the system comprising:

5 a configuration engine application of a seller configured for receiving a selection
6 of a feature of the product from a customer, ~~and for validating a number of constraints associated~~
7 ~~with the selected feature, the constraints relating to compatibility between the selected feature~~
8 ~~and other features of the product or availability of the product including the selected feature, the~~
9 seller being a seller of the product to the customer;

10 a communication module coupled to the configuration engine application for
11 communicating the selected feature from the seller to a the supplier, and for receiving over the
12 ~~Internet~~ network an automated real-time response, including an availability date of the selected
13 feature, from the supplier to the configuration engine application, the supplier being a supplier
14 of the selected feature to the seller and being independent from the seller, wherein the
15 communicating and receiving occur during the configuration with the customer; and

16 a first storage area coupled to one of the configuration engine application and the
17 communication module for storing an in-process bill of materials that reflects the selected
18 feature.

1 99. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein after the customer has
2 completed configuring the product, the in-process bill of materials represents a completed bill of
3 materials.

1 100. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 98, wherein in response to the
2 availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer, the communication module communicates
3 a customer-specified availability date to the supplier.

1 101. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 98, wherein the automated real-
2 time response availability date is in response to a customer-specified availability date
3 communicated to the supplier by the communication module.

1 102. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 98, wherein the automated real-
2 time response availability date is in response to a customer-specified price communicated to the
3 supplier by the communication module.

1 103. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein an in-process
2 manufacturing bill of materials is derived from the in-process bill of materials, and reflects the
3 availability date of the selected feature.

1 104. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 98, further comprising:
2 a second storage area coupled to one of the configuration engine application and
3 the communication module for storing an in-process manufacturing bill of materials that reflects
4 the availability date of the selected feature; and

5 a third storage area coupled to one of the configuration engine application and the
6 communication module for storing an in-process pricing bill of materials that reflects a price of
7 the selected feature.

1 105. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 98, wherein the communication
2 module is also for communicating a price of the selected feature from the supplier to the
3 configuration engine application.

1 106. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 105, wherein the communication
2 module comprises:

3 an availability date communication module for communicating the availability
4 date of the selected feature from the supplier to the configuration engine application; and
5 a price communication module for communicating the price of the selected
6 feature to the configuration engine application.

1 107. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein a relationship
2 between the customer and the seller has a configuration side associated with the customer, and a
3 resource planning side associated with the seller, and the customer-seller relationship is
4 respectively one of a consumer-seller relationship, a seller-manufacturer relationship and a
5 manufacturer-vendor relationship.

1 108. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 107, wherein:
2 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, an in-process pricing bill of materials is derived from the in-process bill of
4 materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of materials reflects the price of the selected
5 feature; and

6 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the resource
7 planning side, the in-process pricing bill of materials is derived from an in-process
8 manufacturing bill of materials that is derived from the in-process bill of materials and reflects
9 the received availability date of the selected feature.

1 109. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 98, further comprising:
2 a user interface coupled to the configuration engine application for allowing the
3 customer to interact with the system..

1 110. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 98, further comprising:

2 an inventory library coupled to the configuration engine application for providing
3 the customer a number of the configurable features that can be selected to configure the product.

1 111-113. (Cancelled)

1 114. (Currently Amended) A process for configuring a product that is associated
2 with a number of configurable features, wherein ~~the~~ a customer dynamically interacts with a
3 seller of the product over a network ~~the Internet~~ in order to define a set of sales parameters that
4 includes an availability date of at least one of the configurable features, the method comprising:
5 responsive to the customer selecting a feature of the product, receiving at the
6 seller an automated real-time response from a manufacturer, the automated response including an
7 availability date that corresponds to that selected feature, the response being received by the
8 customer from the seller during a configuration of the product, wherein the manufacturer is
9 independent from the seller;

10 responsive to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
11 communicating a customer specified availability date to the manufacturer;

12 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect that selected feature; and

13 in response to the customer being satisfied with the sales parameters, submitting a
14 completed bill of materials to the manufacturer.

1 115. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, stored on a computer-
2 readable medium, for configuring a product that is associated with a number of configurable
3 features, wherein in response to the computer program product being executed by a processor,
4 the processor performs the steps of:

5 receiving a selected product feature from a customer;

6 communicating over a network the selected feature to a supplier;

7 receiving from a supplier over the network ~~Internet~~ an automated real-time
8 response to the communicated selected feature including an availability date that corresponds to
9 a the product feature selected by a-the customer, the supplier being a supplier of the product
10 feature to a seller and being independent from the seller, the customer being a customer of the
11 seller, wherein the communicating and receiving is during a configuration of the product with the
12 customer.;

13 in response to the availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
14 communicating over the Internet a customer specified availability date to the supplier; and
15 receiving from the supplier over the Internet an automated response including an
16 accommodation based on the customer specified availability date.

1 116. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 115, further
2 comprising:

3 updating a bill of materials to reflect the accommodation received from the
4 supplier.

1 117. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, stored on a computer
2 readable medium, for configuring a product that is associated with a number of configurable
3 features, wherein in response to the computer program product being executed by a processor,
4 the processor performs the steps of:

5 responsive to a customer selecting a feature of the product, receiving over a
6 network ~~the Internet~~ at a seller an automated real-time response including an availability date
7 that corresponds to the selected feature, the automated real-time response being from a
8 manufacturer of the selected feature, the response being received by the customer from the seller
9 during the configuration of the product, wherein the manufacturer is independent from the seller;

10 responsive to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
11 communicating a customer-specified availability date to the manufacturer;
12 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect the selected feature; and
13 in response to the customer being satisfied with a set of sales parameters
14 including the availability date of the selected feature, submitting a completed bill of materials to
15 the manufacturer over the Internet.

1 118. (Currently Amended) A system for configuring a product that is associated
2 with a number of configurable features, wherein the system allows a customer to interact with a
3 supplier of the product over the Internet during the configuration, the system comprising:

4 configuration engine application means for receiving at a seller of the product a
5 selection by the customer of a product feature, the product feature being one of the number of

6 configurable features, and for validating a number of constraints associated with the selected
7 product feature;

8 communication module means coupled to the configuration engine application
9 means for communicating from the seller to the supplier the selected product feature, and for
10 communicating over a network ~~the Internet~~ an real-time availability date of the selected product
11 feature from the supplier to the configuration engine application means, the supplier being a
12 supplier of the selected product feature to the seller and being independent from the seller,
13 wherein the communicating occurs during the configuration with the customer; and

14 storage area means coupled to at least one of the configuration engine application
15 means and the communication module means for storing an in-process bill of materials that
16 reflects the product feature selected by the user.

1 119. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, wherein the availability date
2 received from the manufacturer system over the ~~Internet~~ network is provided by an enterprise
3 resource planning (ERP) system.

1 120. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 114, wherein the step of
2 communicating a customer specified availability date to the manufacturer is followed by
3 receiving from the manufacturer an automated real-time response including an accommodation
4 in response to the customer specified availability date, wherein the accommodation includes a
5 different date or a different price.

1 121. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product
2 incorporating at least one feature to be selected by a customer, the method comprising:

- 3 (a) receiving at a seller a feature selection by the customer;
- 4 (b) updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect
5 constraints imposed by the received selection;
- 6 (c) providing the received selection to a supplier system during a
7 configuration of the product with the customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a
8 supplier of the selected feature, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller, the supplier
9 being a supplier of the feature to the seller;

10 (d) receiving, at a seller, real-time information from the supplier system
11 comprising at least one of availability date and price for the received selection, the information
12 being received by the customer from the seller during the configuration;

13 (e) wherein when an indication is received from the customer ~~desires are~~
14 indicating the customer is not satisfied with the availability date or price, providing to the
15 supplier system at least one of a customer-specified ~~desired~~-availability date and a customer
16 ~~desired~~ price for the received selection;

17 (f) displaying accommodation data from the supplier corresponding to the at
18 least one of a customer-specified ~~desires~~ availability date and price; and

19 (g) updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of
20 materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the selection.

1 122. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 121, wherein the pricing bill of
2 materials is derived from the configuration bill of materials.

1 123. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product
2 incorporating at least one feature to be selected by a customer, the method comprising:
3 receiving at a seller a feature selection by the customer;
4 updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect
5 constraints imposed by the received selection;
6 providing the received selection to a supplier system, the providing being during a
7 configuration of the product with the customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a
8 supplier of the selected feature, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller, the supplier
9 being a supplier of the feature to the seller;

10 receiving at a seller real-time information from the supplier system comprising at
11 least one of availability date and price for the received selection, the information being received
12 by the customer from the seller during the configuration;

13 wherein when an indication is received from the customer ~~desires are~~ indicating
14 the customer is not satisfied with the availability date or price, providing to the customer at least
15 one of a customer-specified ~~desired~~ availability date and a customer-~~desired~~ price for the
16 received selection;

17 displaying accommodation data from the supplier corresponding to the at least
18 one of a customer-specified availability date and price desires; and
19 updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of
20 materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the selection, wherein the pricing bill of
21 materials is derived from the manufacturing bill of materials.

1 124. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 121, wherein the step (g) of
2 updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a
3 configuration bill of materials is based upon the accommodation data from the supplier.

1 125. (Currently Amended) A system for selling a configurable product
2 incorporating at least one feature to be selected by a customer from a catalog of selectable
3 features, the system comprising:

4 an inventory library coupled to a configuration engine of a seller of the
5 configurable product, the inventory library configured for providing the catalog of selectable
6 features, the catalog of selectable features corresponding to a particular configurable product;

7 a user interface coupled to the configuration engine using the network Internet,
8 the user interface for displaying the catalog of selectable features and for receiving customer
9 desires; and

10 a supplier system coupled to the configuration engine using the network Internet,
11 the supplier system being associated with a the supplier of the at least one feature to the seller of
12 the configurable product and being configured for providing an automated real-time response,
13 including at least one of availability information and price information to at least one of the user
14 interface, the configuration engine, and the inventory library, wherein the supplier is independent
15 from the seller, wherein the providing of the automated real-time response occurs during a
16 configuration with the customer.

17 ~~and for providing accommodation data to the configuration engine in automated~~
18 ~~response to customer desires communicated to the supplier system, the configuration engine for~~
19 ~~validating the customer desires against constraints associated with the selectable features, for~~
20 ~~determining whether the at least one of availability information and price information meet~~
21 ~~customer desires, and for communicating specific customer desires to the supplier system.~~

1 126. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 125, wherein the user interface,
2 configuration engine, and supplier system are remotely located with respect to each other.

1 127. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 125, wherein the configuration
2 engine further comprises:
3 a configuration application,
4 a price communication module,
5 an availability communication module, and
6 means for creating and updating at least one of a configuration bill of materials, a
7 manufacturing bill of materials, and a pricing bill of materials.

1 128. (Currently Amended) A method of selling from a supplier a product, the
2 product including at least one selectable feature to be chosen by a customer, the method
3 comprising:
4 providing from a seller to a customer a selectable feature, and at least one of price
5 and availability date of the selectable feature;
6 conveying to the supplier at least one of a customer desired availability date and a
7 customer desired price, the conveying being during a configuration of the product with the
8 customer, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller; and
9 supplying an automated real-time response to a seller from the supplier, the
10 automated response including an accommodation from the supplier based on the at least one of a
11 customer desired availability date and a customer desired price, the response being received
12 during the configuration with the customer, wherein the accommodation data includes a second
13 availability date or a second price.

1 129. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 128, wherein the customer is
2 chosen from a set consisting of a retailer, wholesaler, manufacturer and distributor, of the
3 product.

1 130. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 128, wherein the supplier is
2 chosen from a set consisting of a wholesaler, manufacturer, distributor and vendor, of the
3 product.

1 131. (New) The system of claim 98, where in the configuration engine is
2 configured for validating a number of constraints associated with the selected feature, the
3 constraints relating to compatibility between the selected feature and other features of the
4 product or availability of the product including the selected feature.

1 132. (New) The computer program product of claim 115, wherein the processor
2 performs the additional steps of:
3 in response to the availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
4 communicating over the network a customer-specified availability date to the supplier; and
5 receiving from the supplier over the network an automated real-time response
6 including an accommodation based on the customer specified availability date.

1 133. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date received
2 from the manufacturer system over the network is provided to or by a supply chain planning
3 (SCP) system